

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-07

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C O N F I D E N T I A L AMMAN 2016

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, JO, US, XF
SUBJECT: COURT CHIEF AND GOJ VIEWS ON PRESIDENT CARTER'S RECENT
PUBLIC STATEMENTS.

REF: AMMAN 2008

1. ON APRIL 6 COURT CHIEF ABDUL HAMID SHARAF ADDED FOR US A FEW
PERSONAL INSIGHTS TO HIS APRIL 5 TELEVISION APPEARANCE IN WHICH
HE ANSWERED QUESTIONS ON A NUMBER OF ISSUES OF SALIENT LOCAL
INTEREST IN JORDAN (REFTEL). HE NOTED THAT HE HAD FELT FOR SOME
TIME THAT GOJ SHOULD SPEAK OUT. HE HAD FINALLY CONVINCED OTHERS AND
IT WAS AGREED THAT HE WOULD DO SO. HE HAD BEEN GRATIFIED BY THE
POSITIVE REACTIONS WHICH HE HAD RECEIVED.

2. HE SAID THERE WAS AN INSIDIOUS RUMOR CAMPAIGN ABROAD IN
JORDAN WHICH INSISTED ON PAINTING PRESIDENT CARTER'S STATEMENTS
IN THE DARKEST LIGHT AND THEN DRAWING BLEAK CONCLUSIONS.
IN SOME WAYS THE LOCAL VIEWS HAD EVEN EXCEEDED THOSE COMING FROM
ISRAEL TUOVCMVNE# TO WHICH EAST BANK JORDAN WAS PERCEIVED OF
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AS THE "NEW PALESTINIAN HOMELAND."

3. SHARAF MADE A POINT OF STATING THAT HE HAD FELT FOR SOME
TIME THAT PRESIDENT CARTER'S STATEMENTS WERE EXCELLENT AND THAT
SOMEONE IN THE ARAB WORLD SHOULD WELCOME THEM PUBLICLY AND SAY
SOMETHING POSITIVE ABOUT THEM. I THANKED

HIM FOR THESE SENTIMENTS AND FOR HIS POSITIVE STATEMENTS ON TELEVISION.

4. SHARAF SAID THAT THE QUESTIONS WHICH HE HAD BEEN ASKED HAD BEEN THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE LOCAL JOURNALIST WHO ASKED THEM. THE JOURNALIST WAS TOLD NOTHING WAS OUT OF BOUNDS. SHARAF SAID THAT AFTER A FEW MINUTES PRE TAPING DISCUSSION HE WAS CONFIDENT THAT THE INTERVIEWER WOULD ASK HIM ABOUT THE MAJOR SUBJECTS OF INTEREST.

5. WHEN I POINTED OUT THAT THE LOCAL PRESS SEEMED TO HAVE MISSED IN ITS REPORTING SOME OF THE MAIN POINTS WHICH HE MADE, ESPECIALLY GOJ'S BELIEF THAT US DID NOT INTEND PALESTINIAN HOMELAND TO BE LOCATED ON EAST BANK OF JORDAN RIVER (NOTE: TODAY'S ENGLISH LANGUAGE PRESS TODAY DOES CONTAIN GOJ DISCLAIMER ON THAT POINT). SHARAF GAVE ME A RESIGNED LOOK AND SAID THAT THE LOCAL PRESS HAS A LEFTWARD TILT AND WOULD DO WHAT IT COULD TO INSURE THAT ITS READERS KNEW THIS. HE SAID AT THE END OF THIS PORTION OF OUR TALK THAT HE REALLY DID NOT KNOW WHAT THE RUMOR MONGERS HAD HOPED TO ACCOMPLISH BY RAISING IRRATIONAL AND FALSE FEARS AMONG JORDANIANS THAT THE US WAS GOING TO DUMP JORDAN IN FAVOR OF THE PALESTINIANS AND CREATE IN TURN AN EAST BANK PALESTINIAN STATE. I SAID THAT IT SEEMED CLEAR TO ME THAT ANTI-AMERICAN MOTIVES WERE PROBABLY AT THE HEART OF THE CAMPAIGN. HE SAID HE WAS NOT SURE AND THOUGHT THAT A NUMBER OF VINDICTIVE LOCAL POLITICIANS MIGHT WELL BE AT THE HEART OF THE EFFORT IN A KIND OF PERSONNAL VENDETTA. AS RELATED REFTTEL, SOME EAST BANK POLITICIANS MAY ALSO BE AFTER JOBS CURRENTLY HELD BY PALESTINIANS.

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PICKERING

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